

MINUTES

Minutes of the James Rennie School Local Advisory Board meeting, held at James Rennie School, California Road, Carlisle, CA3 0B, on 23rd October 2025 starting at 13:15pm.

Attendance:

John Barradell	JB	LAB Chair
Rachel Woolley	RW	LAB Member (Teacher)
Lisa Faulder	LF	LAB Member (TA and Parent)
Kerry Dunbobbin	KD	Headteacher
Lisa Johnston	LJ	LAB Member (Teacher)
Nick Timotheou	NT	LAB Member (Parent)
Kate Braniff	KB	Assistant Headteacher
Also present		
Emma McDermott	EM	Clerk

Apologies:

Mel Kinsella	MK	LAB Member
Brian Eaton	BE	LAB Member
Nicola McInnes	NM	LAB Member

Absent:

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Ref.	Discussions and decisions	Action
1/2025/26	Welcome, introductions and apologies Apologies were received and accepted from – Mel Kinsella, Brian Eaton and Nicola McInnes	
2/2025/26	Declaration of interests and offer/receipt of gifts or hospitality There were no new declarations.	
3/2025/26	Minutes and actions from the last meeting Minutes of the meeting held on 19 th June 2025 were agreed. Ref. item #: 3/2025/26	

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4/2025-26	Feedback from LAB Liaison and other Board/Committee meetings JB advised that the main points from the last LAB liaison meeting were LAB membership and the Eden Academy training modules. The focus is mainly on recruitment of LAB members and their portfolio's. The LAB group would benefit from someone with a legal background. KD suggested possibly a local neighbour joining the LAB, he currently works for the police. NT advised he still doesn't have an Eden email address – EM advised she will chase this up with Gabi at the academy.	
5/2025-26	Head's update <u>SIP - School improvement plan:</u> SIP shows the priorities for the year; the SIP format has been changed and has been broken down into 5 keys areas: Assessment Framework – School are looking to successfully implement the Earwig Assessment framework for all parents. Communication work – Jen Sinclair (communication lead) is doing a brilliant job at making sure that each child has a voice in school. The main priority is to enhance communication by ensuring that every child has access to the most appropriate communication method, including AAC. Semi-formal curriculum – This is an ongoing piece of work, to try and develop the semi-formal curriculum into the two clear pathways ensuring that all semi-formal learners have a broad and balanced curriculum. Pressure on school places/Outreach programme – To further develop the current outreach programme to provide specialist support in an increased number of local schools. This may help ease the pressure on school places at James Rennie. Vulnerable groups – To ensure that all pupils in identified vulnerable groups achieve in line with their peers. This year school is looking at children with safeguarding concerns, children that are medically vulnerable, and looked after children. <u>SEF – Self Evaluation Form:</u> That will get finalised later in the year <u>SMI Data and Report:</u> KD spoke through the SMI data and looked at the key headlines. Every term this data gets analysed and compared to other schools in the trust. An action plan is then created from the data. In comparison James Rennie is the highest in terms of staff absence, however they do have	

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	the highest number of staff. Eden have been working on staff wellbeing and are looking to role out long service awards, paid for prescriptions. James Rennie have now moved onto a school wellbeing programme which gives staff access to mindful sessions, therapy, gym memberships, physio etc. School have also been looking at flexible working hours for teachers so they have the option to do their planning at home. <u>School Improvement visits:</u> Carly and Kris are coming to do a quality assurance visit looking at curriculum and provision. <u>Financial and Building:</u> Amy has provided a brief financial update - the budget this year is pretty good. Budget is just over 7 million - and school is at Eden's preferred staffing levels (85%). There may be an overspend when the school gets more pupils. There is a vacancy still out for a full-time school nurse. <u>Building works:</u> School are looking to re-surface the outdoor area by purple class. School have recently invested in a new cooker to fit in more meals. Hoists have been replaced, St Ed's are getting their outdoor area re-done and the car park tarmacked. Work is also being carried out on site security, fencing etc. Indigo class are getting a canopy on the outside of their classroom so they have space for more equipment. New classroom is due to be finished 31st October. On Monday 03rd November the 8 new pupils will be moving into pink class and pink class will be moving into the new building. <u>Staffing and Pupil information:</u> James Rennie currently has 174 staff and by November will be at 216 pupils and pan is still 195. Kris has had a meeting with the local authority and has secured a meeting in November with Julie Minns, Local Authority, Kerry and the head of Mayfield school. KD is going to do some comparative data on incidents, accidents, car parking, taxis to bring to this meeting to show the increased pressure on the school due to the increase in school numbers. An internal advert has gone out for a deputy headteacher and Carly is going to interview alongside Kerry for this. School have 9 places for September and have already had 25 applications and have 6 gone to tribunals. <u>Pupil outcome report:</u> Sophie does assessment and data – pupils made excellent progress last year, however last year was the first year using Earwig. This year it will be good to look at the data and compare to last year. Positive outcome reports for main site and post 16. JB advised that on the next agenda he would like to talk more about health and the NHS and getting a school nurse. KD advised she would invite Oliver to the next LAB meeting	

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	to discuss this. Rachel Wilcox has been working with the school and is a real advocate for Health in special schools.	
6/2025-26	Stakeholder engagement Previously mentioned above	
	Curriculum Review: KB advised that the school need to look at the semi-formal curriculum pathway, the vast majority of pupils sit at this level of curriculum but P4-P8 is a huge range for the needs of the pupils that are in school now. KB is part of the Eden Curriculum team and they are looking at splitting the curriculum to an explore and engage branch. Explore being a more sensory based curriculum and engage branch being more formal levels of learning and in a more classroom-based setting. KB and Kris have recently met to discuss the plan going forward to push this out. KB has delivered insets to teachers and TA's about the curriculum. KB has been seeking help and advice from the other schools in the academy. The southern hub has begun to implement their new branches of exploring and engaging types of curriculum. KD advised that this will help with looking at class lists when trying to put the pupils together. LJ advised that it makes total sense to do this and that the teaching quality will overall be better. KB advised this way of curriculum will help pupils to use their level of learning when out in the community. LF advised that she likes the idea of splitting the curriculum from a parent's point of view.	
7/2025-26	LAB engagement LAB members to be regularly invited to all events in school. NT advised it would be good to get a new PTFA/Extended Schools co-ordinator in school as the PTFA need someone on the inside to co-ordinator events and fundraisers. KD advised she is currently putting together a new PTFA advert.	
8/2024-25	Items to be raised with the Board of Trustees Nothing to raise	

There are no confidential minutes for this meeting.

Meeting closed at 14:30pm

These minutes have been issued to the Chair and Head for comment / agreed by the Chair and Head / agreed by the LAB at its subsequent meeting on <date>
Delete as appropriate

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ACTION SUMMARY

Agenda item x/2023-24		Action	Who
	04/2025/2026	EM to chase academy for Eden emails	EM
	05/2025/2026	Next agenda to feature health update	JB